THE CORONATION OF COMPANIONSHIP

Lk.23:43"Verily I say unto thee, To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise."

INTRO. A mother once asked her little girl,"For what do you love Jesus most?" "I love him most for the way he spoke to the dying thief."

And it was most amazing the way Jesus spoke to the criminal hanging by his side. The thief had not asked for pardon, rewards, honors, or anything expeptp to be remembered. Speaking to the other robber hanging there this one had acknowledged his own guilt and the the justice of his punishment, and had defended the Christ as innocent. And when he asked Jesus to remember him when he reached his kingdom, the dying Savior replied, "Verily I say unto thee,this day thou shalt be with me in Paradide." Here in this situation of these dying men, the personal relationship became supreme. Here we see the coronation of companionship.

I. What had these two in common to make them companions?

Their lives as far apart as the sun fromthe earth.
Their deeds as different as day and night.

1. They were comrades in suffering.

Both under condemnation and scorned by the crowds.
Both pierced by nails hanging to a tree, awaiting th the end of their agony.

Suffering brings folk together when there is nothing else in common between them. Calamity. Hospital.

2. The thief did not doubt the reality of Christ's kingdom and the ultimate triumph of the this good man, even tho he was dying there in a cross of shame. The thief hada faith in Jesus that is almost as amazing as Christ's words. On the other hand Jesus did not doubt the sincerity of the robber.There was a mutual faith and trust that made companionship possible.

II. How may a man best measure the reality and richness of his Christian life? By his religious habits? by his benevolent deeds? by his beliefs and confessions? By none of these, but by sharing with Christ all the experiences of life in intimate friendship and fellowahip.

"O Master, let me walk with Thee."

To live with Jesus in intimate friendship and companionshi is the height of Christian realization.

See how the Master companioned with his disciples! and how by so doing he changed their whole lives!

2. And what was the object of Christ's companionship with his disciples? To bring them and thru them all the world into fellowship with God.

Nothing so enalrges, broadens anddeepens our personali as fellowship with God. God is omnipotent, yes. He is omniscient, yes. He is omnipresent, yes. But he is above all Immanuel-God with us.

The Bells of St.Nicolas at Amsterdam.

In the midst of our sufferings and sorrows and trials and fai lures life is full of harsh and bitter experiences, but when we fellowship with God, when He i is our Immanuel, then we catch the music of life- all is harmony and melody.

The Real Comfort.

In 1865 Lord Frqncis Douglas, while climbing the Matterhorn, fell into a crevassea/ and perished. Computed that in 1995 his body would be releaaed at the snaut of the glacier. His aged mother there to receige it! Ghrist has prepered an infinitely better way. We dont have to hang onto the decayed bodies of our lov ones, because Christ gives to us the living glorified personality in the infinite love of a Heavenly Father. Not the last snatching glimpse of a face that is gone, but for ever and ever in the fellowship of heaven!

Companionship with God deepens and sweetens our companionships with one another.

The Only Bond.

Parable of the woman whose humband died, and because she loved him so, she sought with all her might how to reach hi An angel came to her and said/"Thy crying has been heard, what is thy need?" "That I may find the soul of my husband who is dead." The shini g one answered,"That may b done only if there is a bond between you that death cannot break."

And she said, surely there is a bond! I have been wit him is all the joys and sorrows of life. I have borne to him the sacred name of wife." Angel shook head.

"Surely there is a bond! I held his children in my arms, with their innocence we were bound together. By the sorrow in which I bore them there is an enduring bond."

"My spirit and that of my hunband were one: in naught were we separate. We were one. Does not that bond hold?"

But the angel slowly and sorrowfully replied,"It does not

hold. In the domain of Death all these bonds crumble to nothing, the very shape of them departing as tho they never were. Think yet once more ere I depart if there is one thread to bind thee to thy husband."

"Once, but it was long ago, he and I thot of God togetl together."

Then the angel gave a loud cry and smote the ground with his wings, exclaiming, "Thou hast found the bond! th thou hast found the bong!

And the woman looked, and lo! there lay in her hand a ting thread, golden as if wound from the strands of the sunlight, and it led into the darkness."

Companionship with God in Christ is the golden thread which leads us beyond the darkness of earth into the realm of eternal light and life.